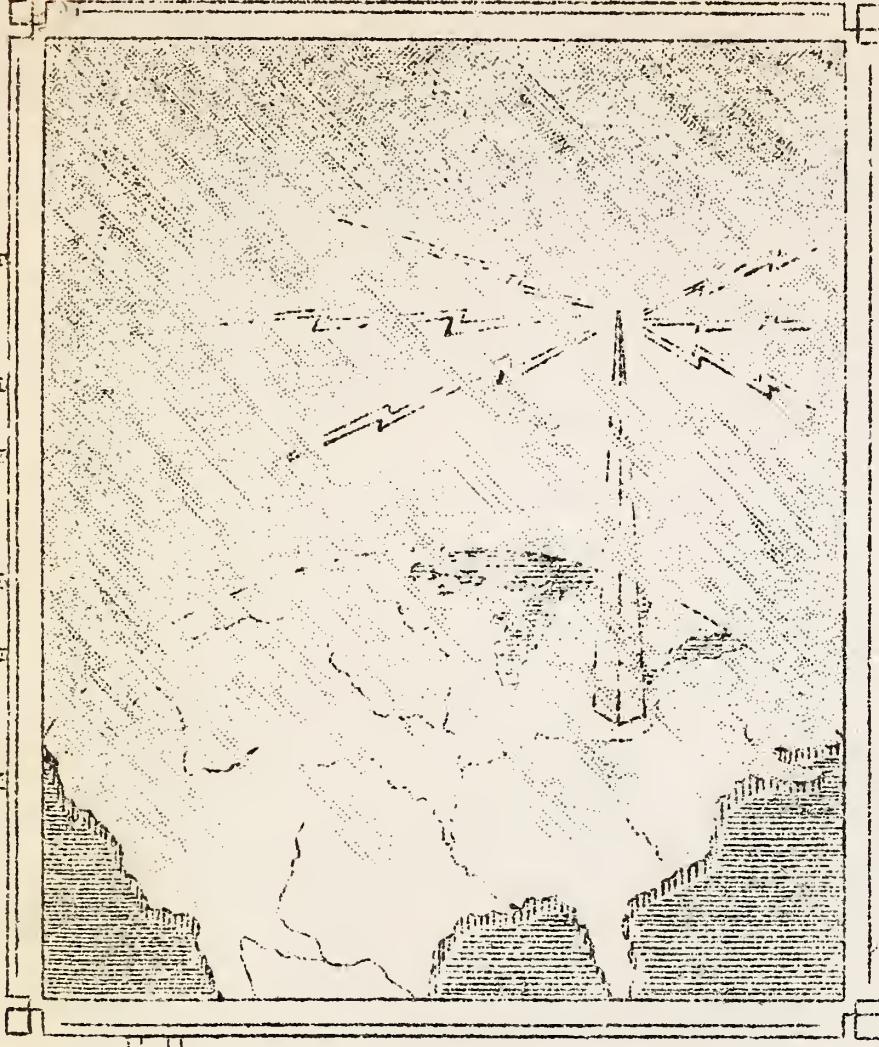


Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



FORTUNES

WASHED

AWAY

"THE BOY WHO DID NOT
LEAVE THE FARM"

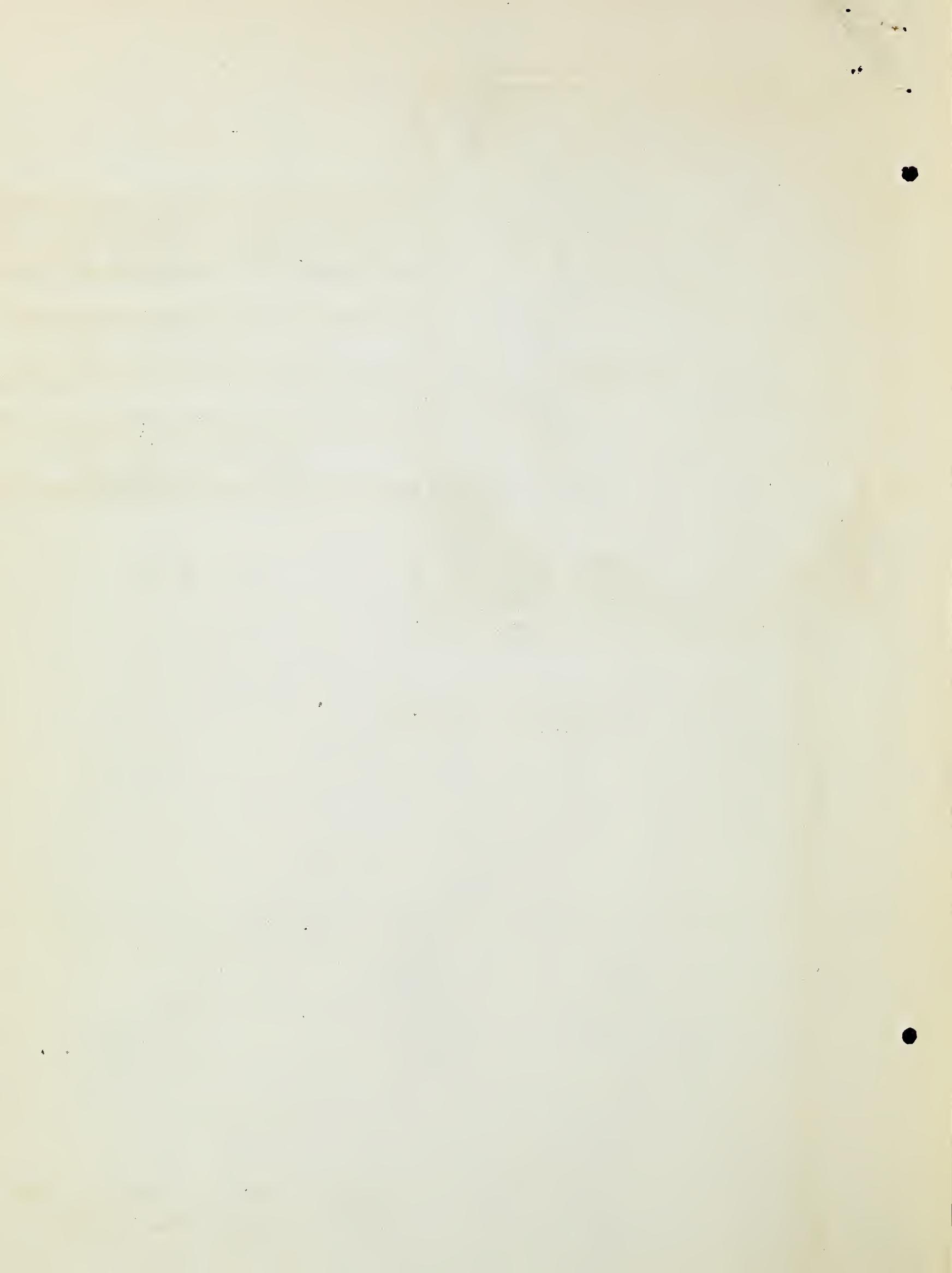
Broadcast No. 11 in the third year
in a series of dramatizations
of better land use

WLW, Cincinnati

July 6, 1940

1:15-1:30 p.m.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
DAYTON, OHIO



SOUND: Thunder and rain...

ANNOUNCER

Fortunes Washed Away!

ORGAN THEME: I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS.

ANNOUNCER

Long, long ago, the friendly hills of Belmont County greeted Ohio's pioneer families struggling through the forests in their picturesque Conestoga wagons. These forested hills became farmlands. Railroads soon competed with the famed Zane Trace as a mode of travel. One traveler over the old B. Z. & C. Railroad ("badly zigzag and crooked", it was called then) exclaimed on reaching Belmont County, "it seemed as though we were on the roof of the world. Forests, huge, round, grassy hills, and a vast boundless prospect stretching like a billowy ocean of green, with here and there red-hued plowed fields...white farmhouses glistening in the morning sun." That is Belmont County, Ohio.

ORGAN: THE SINGING HILLS.

ANNOUNCER

This is the true story of Edward B. Miller, who farms the hills of Belmont County. A few years ago, he was returning from a farm picnic...

SOUND: Car running, comes to halt...

MILLER

Just a minute...I'll get the gate.

CLARA

All right, Ed. (THEN WITH ALARM) Ed! Look! The barn!

MILLER

What's that? Oh, good heavens!

CLARA

Burned clear to the ground. That's what that light in the sky was.

MILLER

Burned up. And just when we had it loaded with the best crop of hay in years. Must've been struck by lightning.

CLARA

Oh, Ed...I've thought all along that farming would whip us. Crops don't seem as good, the ground washes away every time it rains... and now this had to happen.

MILLER

Well, it's a mighty tough blow, Clara. Only last week I finished putting that new slate roof on. It's not even paid for.

CLARA

This is the last straw. What are we going to do?

MILLER

I'll tell you what we're going to do. We're going to go right out in the woods and start cutting timber for a new barn. There's no use to give up!

ORGAN: THEY CUT DOWN THE OLD PINE TREE, fading down to...

SOUND: Door opens and closes...

JOHN

I put the milk in by the separator, Mother.

CLARA

All right, John.

MILLER

Sit down a minute, John. I want to talk to you.

JOHN

All right.

MILLER

Your Mother was telling me you had some fool notion.

JOHN

What about?

MILLER

She says you want to leave the farm.

JOHN

Well, I've been thinking about it. Otto and Clem have already gone...you know yourself the farm isn't paying. I don't see any future in it.

CLARA

But don't you see that it means breaking up the family?

JOHN

Well, yes...but I thought...

MILLER

Maybe he's right, Clara. The farm's about wore out. Maybe we'd better try to sell out and start over again somewhere else.

CLARA

I've told you all along we couldn't make a go of it...and yet... this is our home. We've been here over 30 years. We've seen our boys grow up...

MILLER

...and leave home.

JOHN

The trouble is, these hills are steep. You know how it is... nearly every year the soil washes down and covers the tobacco, and we have to plant it over and over. And the slopes are getting so they won't make a decent catch of hay. They're all cut up with gutters.

MILLER

I know. That last rain washed our beans clear to Somerton.

CLARA

Semms like there ought to be something we can do. Heaven knows we're willing to work hard enough.

MILLER (half-heartedly)

I'll tell you what I'll do, John. If you'll stay on the farm, I'll give you that field east of the barn.

JOHN (irritably)

Sure you'll give it to me. You know it won't grow anything.

CLARA

There must be something...there must be.

ORGAN: THE GOOD GREEN ACRES OF HOME.

MILLER

Now, let's see, John...here's the farm plan Mr. Dougherty worked out.

JOHN

If it's anything like Edmond's plan, it ought to be all right.

Man alive, is he ever crazy about strip farming.

MILLER

Yes, I'm glad he told us about it. And I'm glad to find out about this contour cultivation. You know how good your corn was last year.

JOHN

Yeah...more than twice as good as any we ever had. And that's the field I said wouldn't grow anything.

MILLER

Well, we'll have to use a lot of lime. Where's that soil survey county agent Bob Lang gave us?

JOHN

Here it is.

SOUND: Rustling of pages being turned...

MILLER (reading)

Here's the place. In the control of erosion, very steep land should be allowed to revert to woods, the hillsides should be plowed at right angles to the slope...

JOHN

...instead of up and down hill.

MILLER

Yes. Hillsides should not be overpastured, and the grass should be encouraged by applications of lime and superphosphate. Dead grass means destructive erosion.

JOHN

That means we'll have to buy a lot of lime.

MILLER

It'll be worth it. The increase in production will more than pay for it.

JOHN

All right. Now how about that farm plan?

MILLER

Well, now...this field here will be strip cropped. And right up there is where Mr. Dougherty said to put in that diversion terrace.

JOHN

Dad, I just can't see that ditch. Water won't run uphill.

MILLER (laughing slightly)

Oh, it just looks like it's uphill. As a matter of fact, it's on a gentle downgrade, and will empty in that draw where it won't do any cutting.

JOHN

Maybe so, but the first thing you know we'll have all the neighbors coming over to see our race track around the hill.

MILLER

Yes, and when they see it full of water, keeping the soil from washing down below, they'll be glad they did.

JOHN

Well, ever since I got that good crop of corn by contour plowing, I'm willing to try anything once.

ORGAN: THE GOOD GREEN ACRES OF HOME, fading down to...

SOUND: Shotgun fired...

CLARA (fading in)

What in the world are you up to, John?

JOHN (Laughing)

That's the fastest I ever saw a brood sow run. Look at her tear out!

CLARA

You ought to be ashamed of yourself. If Mr. Murphy ever finds out about you shooting at his pigs he'll jump all over you.

JOHN

Then he ought to keep them at home.

MILLER (fading in)

Here! What's this all about?

CLARA

John just took a shot at Mr. Murphy's pigs.

MILLER

I've been wanting to do the same thing myself. Imagine them coming a mile away...just to eat our grass. Funny thing, too...I can't understand why they seem to enjoy the grass on this particular field.

JOHN

I think I know why. Remember, this is the field that had the lime and fertilizer first.

MILLER

By George, you're right.

JOHN

We couldn't get a decent catch of legumes and grasses---until we limed. We used to buy hay, but since we limed it we have it to sell. We have the most hay in history--high as wheat. Lime is the reason.

CLARA

I don't know what the reason is. But I walked over the farm the other day for the first time in two years, and it nearly knocked me over the way it's changed. Everything is so green, and the soil doesn't wash like it used to. John is here on the farm to stay. This whole soil conservation plan--well, I like it. It's not only put new life in the farm---it's put new life in us. We're growing old, Ed...but we're building this farm to stay. I feel like giving thanks.

ORGAN: GOOD GREEN ACRES OF HOME.

ANNOUNCER

That is the true story of Edward B. Miller, his wife Clara, and their son John...conservation farmers of Belmont County, Ohio. And now, once again we turn to the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, and here is Ewing Jones.

JONES

Thanks, [redacted]. I wish you could talk to the Millers yourself...because there is a family that really has had a change in spirit. Their neighbors say that this farm has shown more improvement in three years than any other farm in that section of the county. Furthermore, many of their neighbors who wouldn't think of farming in strips are adopting contour strip cropping. Naturally, many of them will get a lot of help from the strip cropping bulletin issued by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Here's a copy of it, [redacted].

ANNOUNCER

"Strip Cropping for Soil Conservation." Say, if all strip-cropped fields looked as attractive as that one on the cover, I should imagine just about every farmer would want to try this soil-saving practice.

JONES

Well, not every farmer, because not every farm is suited to this method of hanging on to the soil. But many in the Ohio Valley are, and that's the reason this bulletin was prepared. Over here on page 25, for example, are the directions for laying out contour strips. And on page 35, you'll find the various rotations that have been found most practical. Oh, it contains plenty of information about soil conservation.

ANNOUNCER

And that gives me my cue, Ewing. Friends, if you would like a copy of the illustrated bulletin on strip cropping, just send a letter or a penny postcard to Soil Conservation, Dayton, Ohio. I'll repeat that address, Soil Conservation, Dayton, Ohio.

SOUND: Boom of cannon...

ANNOUNCER

This week we salute!

JONES

This week we salute Mr. H. A. Studor, of Muskingum County, Ohio. Just a few years ago he had a steep, eroded field that grew nothing but poverty grass. Only one-fourth of the original topsoil remained. Mr. Studor treated it with lime and fertilizer, and seeded it to sweetclover, timothy, and a small amount of Kentucky bluegrass at a cost of approximately \$10 per acre. He used careful management in cutting and grazing. Today, that field is well protected against further erosion. He received enough sweet clover seed and hay by the second year to pay for the cost of improvement. That field is now highly productive pasture land, with a carrying capacity of one animal unit per acre. A salute to H. A. Studor, of Muskingum County, Ohio.

SOUND: Telegraph key clicking...

ANNOUNCER

News in the conservation world!

JONES

Here's a bit of timely information from R. H. Morrish, regional agronomist for the Soil Conservation Service in the Ohio Valley region. Please, _____.

ANNOUNCER

Because of weather conditions and a late spring, many farmers failed to do their usual June pasture mowing. But Morrish says that it's still not too late. He points out that by eliminating weeds on pasture land, farmers can develop a better sod to control erosion and provide more and better grazing for their livestock.

Weeds compete with pasture grasses for plant food, moisture and growing space, and shade out many of the more desirable plants. Mowing weeds before they have a chance to go to seed is one of the best ways of eliminating this unprofitable weed crop.

One mowing won't do the job, Morrish warns. Weeds come in cycles and pastures must be mowed several times during the growing season to prevent reseeding. Each successive crop of weed seed must be destroyed before the seeds mature. He suggests that the second mowing be done in late August.

He places emphasis on the fact that when mowing bitterweed, it is essential to set the cutter bar so as to clip only the flower. Bitterweed develops flowers at the point at which the plant is clipped, and mowing close to the ground the first time makes it difficult to reach the flowers thereafter. Being an annual, it is necessary to mow bitterweed often enough to keep them from producing seed.

Summing up, then, Morrish says that controlling weed growth in pastures has far reaching effects. Grass is given a chance to grow, erosion is slowed down or eliminated, and the land is made valuable for producing feed for livestock.

JONES

Thanks, _____ . And here's a final word, this time from Louis Bromfield, who told the American Library Association conference in Cincinnati recently, "This generation and future generations have a definite obligation. The job is to put this country right. That job comes to us in a hundred ways. It comes in terms of soil conservation, of attacking erosion, of building dams, of building systems to break down the destruction of floods." That is the word from Louis Bromfield, a man who is close to the land.

ORGAN: BRIEF BRIDGE.

SMITHERS

Hello, Smathers.

SMAHERS

Hello, Smithers.

SMITHERS

Terrible war, isn't it.

SMAHERS

Terrible.

SMITHERS

Lot of fighting going on, Smathers.

SMAHERS

Awful lot, Smithers.

SMITHERS

Too bad, isn't it.

SMAHERS

Sure is.

SMITHERS

You know what they ought to do, Smathers?

SMAHERS

No, what, Smathers?

SMITHERS

They ought to all get around a conference table and iron things out.

SMAHERS

Maybe they couldn't agree.

SOUND: Shrill screech and boom.

ANNOUNCER

I know one thing they could agree on.

SMITHERS AND SMAHERS

What!

ANNOUNCER

If you would like a copy of the illustrated bulletin on strip cropping, send a letter or a penny postcard to Soil Conservation, Dayton, Ohio.

ORGAN THEME: I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS.

#

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